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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

In Today's Papers

FM Davutoglu in Tehran: Turkey Is Ready To Do What Is Necessary To Avoid New Sanctions on Iran
Media report Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu returned to Turkey on Sunday after an official visit to Tehran, Iran. During the visit, Davutoglu met Iranian FM Motaki, President Ahmadinejad, Iranian Parliament Speaker Larijani and Saeed Jalili, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and chief nuclear negotiator. Iran's official news agency reported Davutoglu told Jalili during their meetings, "We hope that negotiations between Iran and the West will begin in the shortest possible time and we are ready to host those negotiations." Davutoglu also said during a press conference on Saturday that what Turkey was trying to do was "to prevent Iran from being kept away from the global and regional economy." Davutoglu emphasized, "Therefore, Turkey is ready to do what it has to do to avoid new sanctions on Iran and to lift the current sanctions."

Turkey to Buy Patriot Missiles from the U.S.
Weekend media reported Turkey has decided to purchase 13 Patriot air-defense systems and 72 missiles from the United States. Mainstream Vatan quotes "U.S. defense expert" Steven Hildreth as saying, "the missile system will provide Turkey with the capability to defend against Iran's short range SCUD missiles." Today in, "Ankara Has Not Made A Decision On The Patriots," mainstream Hurriyet reports "Ankara officials were annoyed that the information was leaked" regarding Turkey's purchase of the system and the paper says "U.S. officials leaked the information," and the information indicating Ankara is set to buy the missiles "is not true."

Editorial Commentary on Sale of Patriot Missile Systems to Turkey

Tulin Daloglu wrote in mainstream HaberTurk: "If this sale is finalized, Turkey will serve as the main country protecting Europe from Iran. As for Ankara, it requires a major policy adjustment given its earlier evasive attitudes regarding Iran's nuclear arms program. FM Davutoglu dreamt of a zero-problem climate with all Turkey's neighbors. However the reality has brought a full stop to this romantic rhetoric. After all, when this happens it will be Turkey's largest military purchase from the U.S. and I guess no one

can claim that these missiles are for Turkey's protection against the PKK."

Mehmet Yilmaz wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "If this sale is realized, Turkey will return to its status as one of the biggest military buyers of U.S. equipment. Since these missiles will be placed close to the border with Iran, it naturally indicates security problems with this neighbor. However given this government's foreign policy towards Iran, one wonders about the main motive. The very same government sees no harm in Iranian nuclear tests. At the same time, they are about to spend billions for missile defense. Something is wrong with this picture."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Turkey keeps denying this fact, but everybody knows that Iran's nuclear program is the main reason for purchasing the defense system. On the other hand Syria is planning to modernize its missile inventory. Therefore, it's natural for the Turkish Military to seek an upgrade in air defense systems. In other words, this purchase is not imposed by the U.S.; it is based on Turkey's demand. The procurement of those missiles will bring various advantages to Turkey, one is the increase of Turkey's importance within NATO."

Erdogan: Anti-PKK Operations Will Continue As Long As Terror Continues

Prime Minister Erdogan, during a Sunday visit to Polatli near Ankara, criticized "some circles" which he said were "disturbed" by the ruling AK Party government's move to widen democratic rights and freedoms. "Some seek political gain over the blood of our martyrs. They panic when we talk about national unity, because it will make

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them lose their grounds of exploitation," Erdogan said at a ceremony held to mark the 88th anniversary of the Sakarya Battle. Erdogan also reacted to a call by the pro-Kurdish DTP to stop military operations against the PKK. "Operations will continue as long as terror remains a threat for Turkey," said Erdogan.

Kilic: Lack of Political Dialogue Worse Than Terrorism

Sunday papers report Constitutional Court Chairman Hasim Kilic voiced concerns regarding the political situation in Turkey. "Turkey has a problem worse than terrorism, which is lack of dialogue. Political parties, leaders and people, have closed themselves against each other -- they cannot make any move. It is worse than terrorism if political actors do not communicate face to face," said Kilic.

Education Ministry Issues Circular Against Discrimination

Mainstream Haberturk reports on its front page today that Education Minister Nimet Cubukcu has issued a circular before the start of the new education year, which instructs the teachers in elementary and high schools to lecture on tolerance and against religious, racial and language discrimination. "Discrimination, due to social, cultural and economic reasons, is applied against men, women and the handicapped, and can be seen as racism and intolerance. The Turkish society has always given good examples of peace, tolerance, justice, and respect for humankind and coexistence," said the circular. Haberturk comments the circular was actually asking for support for the ruling AK Party government's Kurdish democratic initiative.

Milliyet: The Armenian People Are Ready for Peace With Turkey

Just one month before the protocols on opening the border crossing between Turkey and Armenia were signed, mainstream Milliyet "took the pulse" of Armenians on the streets of Yerevan. According to Milliyet, the "majority" of Armenians give "full support" to their government to establish ties with Turkey and open the borders. They, however, have a "red line" which is the recognition that a genocide occurred when Ottoman Turks massacred and expelled Armenians during World War I. "Their biggest dream is, one day, to be allowed to live in the lands their grandfathers lived," Government Spokesman Sharmazanov said, "No one can question the Armenian genocide. For Armenians, Eastern Anatolia will always be West Armenia." Anahit, one Armenian Milliyet spoke to, said, "We want Diyarbakir to be ours again. Both Turks, Armenians and Kurds know that Diyarbakir is our hometown."

Obama Vilified By Two Million in DC

Media closely follow the weekend's protests against U.S. President Barack Obama's plan to reform healthcare in the U.S. Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "The U.S. Wasn't Angry at Bush, But They Are Tearing Obama to Pieces." Liberal Radikal headlines, "Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, Castro, Obama!" Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "They Called Obama a 'Communist.'" Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "President Obama's policies are being protested," as "some are accusing him of socializing the country because of his health reform plan." Mainstream Sabah headlines, "Socialist Obama."

Editorial Commentary on Obama's Health Reform

Ali Aslan wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "Tens of thousands are pouring in the nation's capital in order to protest Obama administration's policies, especially regarding the health reform plan. Demonstrators are accusing President Obama of turning the U.S. into a socialist country. There is a more serious backdrop at these demonstrations, which is about the south spirit and the north spirit. The 9/11 attacks encouraged a resurrection of the 'southern spirit,' which despises others. But President Obama is trying to encourage the 'northern spirit' which seeks better terms with others. Given the recent demonstrations on health reform, the southern spirit has no intention to change."

TV News (CNN Turk)

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Domestic

- Prime Minister Erdogan will visit the U.S. from September 21-26 to join UN General Assembly meetings in New York and the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh.

- On Tuesday, DTP leader Ahmet Turk and deputy chairperson Emine Ayna will visit northern Iraq to discuss the Turkish government's Kurdish initiative with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and Iraqi KRG President Massoud Barzani.

- On September 17, Prime Minister Erdogan will host an Iftar fast-breaking dinner for chief editors of newspapers and TV channels.

- More than 100 people were arrested for looting goods from factories and shops following flash floods in Istanbul.

- Alevi organizations have staged protests against compulsory religious instruction in Istanbul.

- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said Turkey's economic importance had grown, adding Turkey could resume a fast track of economic growth as of 2010. Turkey is the 16th largest economy of the 30-member OECD, but currently ranks at the bottom of all 30 in terms of education.

World

- Greek Cypriot leader Christofias says the Turkish Cypriots should hand over the control of Karpaz to Southern Cyprus and allow the settlement of 20,000 Greek Cypriot migrants in the area.

- Israeli President Shimon Peres is discharged from a Tel Aviv hospital a day after fainting on stage during a talk.

- IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn says "the global economic crisis will continue, even if Germany and France had some good figures in the second quarter."

- A Catalan village of 8,000 people in the Spanish region of Barcelona, holds a referendum on the independence of Catalonia.

JEFFREY